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DE RUEHLM #2067 3480954
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 140954Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4920
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0085
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9691
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6627
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4687
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3395
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0352
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3482
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0494
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2572
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1585
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS COLOMBO 002067

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS, SCA/RA (MILLER), PM/PPA (FEATHERSTONE),

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPKO MARR PREL MASS KSEP CE

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA TO PROCEED WITH GLOBAL PEACE OPERATIONS
INITIATIVE

REF: A) STATE 169188 B) COLOMBO 1762

¶1. (SBU) Following up on ref B, Defense Attaché passed information to Defense Secretary Gothabaya Rajapaksa during a previously scheduled meeting on November 3. DATT later received a call back from Defense Ministry expressing interest and asking for more information. Pol Chief received a request for more details and called at Foreign Affairs Ministry on December 12, after receipt of additional briefing materials from PM and PACOM. Pol Chief discussed the of the program with Director General C.A.H.M. Wijeratne (Bilateral Affairs - West) and Deputy Director Yasoda Gunasekera (UN/Multilateral Affairs) and gave them copies of draft Letter of Request (LOR) and PM PowerPoint presentation.

¶2. (SBU) MFA interlocutors thanked us for the information. Wijeratne asked us to confirm that joining the initiative did not entail a commitment to deploy to any specific PKO. He also pointed out that some Sri Lankan Army (SLA) specialized forces (communications, engineering, logistics and medical) were presently fully engaged in fighting Sri Lanka's two-decade-old ethnic conflict with the LTTE (Tamil Tigers). We indicated understanding for the current situation in the country.

¶3. (SBU) Our Sri Lankan counterparts told us that their government was highly interested in joining GPOI, and that the initiative had the support of both MFA and MoD. Wijeratne said the Government of Sri Lanka was not sure how to respond formally, since they had until now only received informal briefing materials. We proposed an exchange of letters between Ambassador and Foreign Minister as an expeditious way to take note of a mutual desire to proceed with the partnership. Our MFA interlocutors agreed this would be appropriate.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Blake sent a letter to Foreign Minister Samaraweera on December 13 based on ref a and the GPOI fact sheet provided by PM (copy e-mailed to SCA/INS). Post anticipates receiving a reply from the Foreign Minister

within a few days. Pol section and Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) stand ready to facilitate visits by an assessment team and to help implement activities under GPOI within Sri Lanka, or elsewhere.

BLAKE